

## SOCIAL RELIEF IN THE NORTHWEST DURING THE CIVIL WAR

THE outbreak of the Great War in 1914 probably sent tumbling more individual philosophies of life than any other event in history, in so short a time. Millions who did not know that they had a philosophy of life, suddenly found that their whole way of viewing their relationships to outside things had been changed in a night. In America two fundamental conceptions, the capacity of human nature for progressive improvement and the efficiency of democratic government, were emphatically challenged. The small minority who had denied them claimed recognition as prophets, many of those who had doubted joined them, and the majority became doubters. The era of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, which hung in the popular imagination as the greatest of world calamities, was instantly surpassed by the scope and the intensity of the new struggle. The material advances of a hundred years served only to intensify the horror, and the increased efficiency of governmental organization had made it possible to wring the last ounce of strength from every individual, and seemed to have hardened the heart of the combatants to endure and to inflict injuries which the world supposed it had outgrown.

A minute comparison of the two great war epochs, however, brings out certain significant differences, which are in the direction of what is commonly called progress. The treatment of sick and wounded has improved more in the last hundred years than in all previous history; and this has quite obviously been due, not only to the increase of medical skill, but also to the amount of attention devoted to them. Napoleon recognized that an army "marches on its belly", but the wars of his period show nothing of the absorption of the world's mind by the "boys in the trenches", which has for two years busied the leisured classes in neutral as well as belligerent countries. Still more modern is the love and care lavished upon non-combatants. Nearly all the belligerent countries have provided maintenance allowances, and in addition have raised great funds by subscription for their relief, while neutral countries have poured out millions for the refugees of all nations and have extended their care to such non-essential but significant details as Christmas gifts for the children.

The motives for these changes are as varied and even contradictory as are the forces underlying any other great historic change. Not love of humanity alone but also economic insistence upon the necessity of conserving national resources, has given the impulse, and the result is not due entirely to change of heart but in large measure to the white light of publicity which makes even wilful blindness to conditions almost impossible. But whatever the process, the fact remains that the internal history of the two war cycles reveals sufficient advance in democratic regard for the welfare of the individual, and sufficient flooding of national boundaries by the spirit of humanity, to constitute if not an epoch, at least the difference between the opening and the middle of an epoch.

Midway between the two came the Crimean War and our own Civil War. During the first Florence Nightingale caught the attention of the world for the sufferings of the soldiers and exhibited an organizing ability that gave a solid basis to her dreams. In the second the best talent of our own country took up the problem. The Sanitary Commission, independent of the government but acting in co-operation with it, not only gave incalculable comfort to the men in the ranks, but made it impossible for any government in the future to neglect them. Out of their labors arose the Red Cross and since then countless provisions, national and international, have represented a world-wide effort to reduce the horrors of the battlefield to a minimum.

The less sensational, but not less real, wretchedness of those who remained at home, when the breadwinners and chief counsellors of countless families were called to war, naturally attracted less prompt and less intense attention. The soldiers' pay was never large enough to supply their necessities, and while they were seldom left to starve, they were merged in the general mass of poor. Where bounties were granted for enlistment, as in the Revolution and the War of 1812, they served to stave off distress, but their purpose seems to have been purely that of securing recruits. They merely showed that under the volunteer system, the individual could coerce the community into doing something for him: they were determined by supply and demand, by the need for men not the needs of the men. Some may remember that the problem was dealt with by committees during the Spanish War, but most persons would date the first general consciousness of its existence to Kipling's *Absent-Minded Beggar* during the Boer War. Nevertheless it had been handled in a large and systematic manner forty years before.

Promptly, and without important discussion, the attitude toward

the dependents of the soldiers changed on the outbreak of our Civil War. Or rather it was recognized that it had changed. The general trend of thought and political action had been such that, when the old situation recurred, it was at once realized that it could not be met in the old way; that the families of our volunteer soldiers must not be left without care, that the dependents of those who gave up their time and strength and risked their lives for the general good, must not be treated as at one with those who were unable to maintain themselves in the ordinary times of peace.

Everywhere the states took up the problem; not only the states of East<sup>1</sup> and West, but also the separated states of the South,<sup>2</sup> where impoverished South Carolina in 1863 and 1864, the financial system failing, provided a tax in kind, two and then three per cent. of the harvest of wheat, corn, and many other products. In cases where a state lagged behind its fellows their example was used to prick it on, but, in the main, action was due to simultaneous impulse from within, rather than to interaction. This is shown by the independence of their measures, each employing the machinery ready to its hand. The various plans show none of that slavish copying of one state by another, which so often characterized legislation even before the days of state reference bureaus and governors' conferences. As the war wore on there developed some degree of similarity in the results aimed at, but, on the whole, the period was one of experiment; our federal system was working according to its genius.

In taking Wisconsin as a centre from which to study this movement, the leading motive was the accessibility of a mass of manuscript material,<sup>3</sup> which made it possible to study it intimately. This is an advantage that Wisconsin will continue to enjoy over most states, for the administration was more centralized and this meant centralization of material. For purposes of comparison I have extended the study to the other four states of the Old Northwest. The results would not have shown any striking differences if the Trans-Mississippi had been included, but the East would show some

<sup>1</sup> The Eastern States deserve special study, as some methods quite different from those noted here were employed.

<sup>2</sup> The provisions by the Southern States began somewhat later but were conceived on a most generous scale. Of their execution I know nothing.

<sup>3</sup> War Papers, Governors' Correspondence, Relief. This material is very extensive, but is not yet arranged, and there exists at present no method of reference. It was all examined for this subject and all the letters noted later, except those specified, are to be found in it. The dates given will afford means of reference later, as it will be chronologically arranged.

interesting divergencies and the South, by choice and necessity, used methods quite its own.

To begin with the least direct relief, the system of moratorium, which was resorted to in 1914, finds some counterpart in 1861. In an effort to ameliorate the effect upon the currency of the overthrow of the credit of the Southern States, upon whose bonds it rested, Wisconsin, on April 17, provided that all actions against banks or banking institutions to compel specie payment be deferred until December 1, 1861, that the state laws with regard to the same subject be not enforced, nor any bank-note be protested by a state officer until the same date. Ohio, on January 16, 1862, authorized banks to suspend specie payments until fifteen days after the governor should proclaim that actual resumption had been carried into effect "by a majority of the regular and legally authorized banks of issue in the City of New York".

More specifically affecting soldiers was the Wisconsin law of April 17, 1861, exempting "from all civil process . . . such persons as may enroll themselves in the service of the country". This was modified on May 25 to exclude actions for the foreclosure of mortgages and to enforce mechanics' liens, and on March 15, 1862, to exclude actions in trusteeship and joint indebtedness. On March 22, 1862, the legislature provided that in the case of volunteers all sales of state lands on credit be held *in statu quo* until three months after their discharge, and on April 5, 1862, it was ordered that a stay be granted in all mortgage foreclosure proceedings. On March 31, 1863, volunteers were allowed until April 1, 1865, to redeem "all lands" sold for taxes.<sup>4</sup> Michigan provided in 1862 that all volunteers be exempt from arrest except for "treason, felony, or breach of the peace", that their separate property be exempt "from all process by way of attachment", and that they forfeit no right to land belonging to the trust funds of the state until a year after discharge. Ohio took action practically similar, by laws of May 1, 1861, and March 10 and April 10, 1862. Illinois briefly declared on May 3, 1861, that proof of enlistment was sufficient cause for "the continuance of any suit".

The volunteer had good ground for the belief that relief would not be limited to such negative action. The blazing posters which those seeking recruits plastered along the city streets and spread broadcast over the countryside, dwelt not only on the generous pay offered by the United States, and its land bounties and pensions, but

<sup>4</sup> This still left the war-widow unprotected in her indebted property. See letter of December 22, 1863.



very frequently on the care that would be taken of those at home.<sup>5</sup> The orators at the enrollment meetings asserted that the citizens who remained behind would never allow those dependent on the soldiers to feel the pinch of want. A Wisconsin woman writing to the governor, November 29, 1863, said: "My husband in speaking to the recruiting officer said he had nothing to leave his family provided he should never come back again. The officer told him his family should never suffer." A careful man wrote the governor August 10, 1864, that he and a son had enlisted, leaving a wife and seven children, that he had received two hundred dollars bounty, and that he counted on sending fifteen dollars a month from his own pay, the same amount from that of his son, and on five dollars a month state aid, which would be sufficient for them.

Wisconsin was the only state of this group which undertook to handle the subject through the central administration. On May 25, 1861, it was voted that "non-commissioned officers, musicians and privates mustered into the service of the United States or of this state . . . receive . . . in addition to the pay provided . . . the sum of five dollars a month to all volunteers having families dependent on them for their support". The execution of the law was placed in the hands of the secretary of state,<sup>6</sup> and he was to authorize payments only while the soldier was in actual service as evinced by monthly reports from the regimental officers,<sup>7</sup> or, after April 4, 1864, from hospital authorities. The operation of the law was gradually extended to all Wisconsin volunteers, but never included those entering the regular United States service and consequently excluded the navy. Soldier and family must be residents of the state. The term family was ambiguous. It was defined March 22, 1862, as: "Wife living, and actually dependent", or, there being no wife, children under fourteen, or no children, "infirm or indigent parent or parents, actually dependent upon the labor of said volunteer". By a law of April 4, 1864, in the case of children who

<sup>5</sup> See Fish, "The Raising of the Wisconsin Volunteers", *Military Historian and Economist*, July, 1916.

<sup>6</sup> From this it is obvious that the governor's correspondence which was used does not tell the whole story. Nevertheless the habit of appealing to the governor was very strong, and correspondence sufficient in extent and distribution to warrant general conclusions is to be found in his file. The letters were often endorsed with a reference to the secretary of state including an instruction, and then returned to the governor's file. There is also a mass of material in the office of the state treasurer.

<sup>7</sup> This created great injustice as the reports were by no means regular and often the reporting officers careless. More complaints were due to this provision than to any other.

had lost their mother by death or desertion, the money was to go to "the person having such child or children in charge". No family was to receive more than five dollars a month, but by the law of March 3, 1863, a family having more than one breadwinner in the ranks could transfer its claim in case the one in whose name they received the extra pay should die. A law of April 2, 1863, evinced some delicacy of feeling by allowing the state officials to omit the names of recipients from their annual reports.

Michigan did not provide for state relief, but by laws of May 10, 1861, and January 17, 1862, made it the duty of the board of supervision of each organized county "whenever necessary, to make adequate provision for all requisite relief and support of the families" of volunteers, "separate from, and independent of, the relief, temporary or otherwise, afforded to poor persons under existing laws". In the first law the families of officers were included with those of the men, but the second followed the general practice and excluded them. Relief was not to exceed fifteen dollars a month for each family; the soldier in behalf of whom it was drawn must be in actual service, and in 1864 it was provided<sup>8</sup> that the family must have been resident in the state at the time of enlistment, and the responsibility was to fall upon the county to which the enlistment was credited. March 20, 1863, drafted men and substitutes were granted the benefit of the law, but not drafted men who furnished substitutes.

Ohio stood midway between Wisconsin and Michigan. It left the relief work to the counties, but the legislature made sure that they should have funds, by levying a state tax. The growing seriousness of the problem is indicated by the fact that in 1861 this was not to exceed one-half mill,<sup>9</sup> in 1862 it was fixed at three-fifths of a mill,<sup>10</sup> in 1863<sup>11</sup> at one mill, and in 1864<sup>12</sup> and 1865 at two mills. The grant to the family was to be "as their necessities shall require", and the family was defined as wife, minor children, or dependent parents. Ohio was generous in her comprehension, as the families of officers were not excluded; by law of February 13, 1862, "soldiers enlisted since April 1, 1861, in the regular army of the United States" were included, and by that of March 21, 1863, the families of "marines". The governor announced in his message of 1865 that five thousand dollars had been used from his contingent

<sup>8</sup> Joint resolution no. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ohio, *Session Laws*, May 10, 1861.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, February 13, 1862.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, March 21, 1863.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, February 25, 1864.

fund to relieve the dependents of members of the National Guard who had been employed for a short time.

Indiana made no state provision until March 4, 1865. It then levied two mills "for the purpose of supporting soldiers' families, and sick and wounded Indiana soldiers in hospitals". It included "soldiers, seamen, and marines", but narrowed the definition of family to include merely wife, children under twelve or insane, or dependent mother. Wife or mother was to receive eight dollars a month, with two dollars for each child.

Illinois made no state provision. Even without this exception it is evident that the subject demands study of the activities of counties, cities, towns, and villages. In Wisconsin the state aid was inadequate of itself, and elsewhere the local units had full charge of administration.

In Wisconsin, laws of May 15, 1861, and September 25, 1862, granted the local government authorities the power of taxing "for the support of the families . . . of volunteers". One indication of the frequent exercise of this right is the great number of laws legalizing such taxes in cases where some irregularity of form occurred. Other laws permitted in individual cases the different wards of various cities to tax themselves for the same purpose.<sup>13</sup> For the most part this local relief was voted by the towns, cities, and villages, their total contributions for war expenses amounting to \$7,134,341.12, as compared with \$618,164.55 paid by the counties.<sup>14</sup> Twenty-six counties taxed themselves while thirty-two did not, but in only three was there a complete absence of town and county relief. Rock County was perhaps the most generous, giving at one period ten dollars in winter and a little less in summer.<sup>15</sup> In most cases some smaller sum was given to a wife, with additional allowance for minor children.<sup>16</sup>

I have no record of the Michigan counties. As we have seen, they were all required by state law to take adequate relief measures, but they were the judges of what was adequate, except that no family was to receive over fifteen dollars. State and county relief were therefore identified. Not so in Ohio. The law of May 10, 1861, was really a permissive law for counties. The law of March 21, 1863, allowed the counties to levy half a mill in addition to the

<sup>13</sup> Wisconsin, *Session Laws*, March 10, 1863, allowed the city council of Watertown to tax the fifth and sixth wards not over three dollars a month for each wife, and fifty cents for each child, etc.

<sup>14</sup> *Annual Report of secretary of state*, 1865, app., pp. 132-133.

<sup>15</sup> Letter of Ogden Barrett, November 4, 1862, etc.

<sup>16</sup> It seems, however, to have been the Wisconsin practice to vote a definite sum, whereas Michigan and Ohio tried to meet particular needs.

state tax for the purpose, and that of February 26, 1864, one mill. The governor in his message of 1865 stated that fifteen of twenty-five counties reporting had made such additional levies. Indiana relied for four years wholly on the voluntary action of the counties. By law of May 11, 1861, however, it authorized the local government authorities to levy a special tax "for the protection and maintenance of the families of volunteers in the army of the United States and the state of Indiana". I have not been able to make a study of the action of many Indiana counties, but if we may judge from the experience of Illinois, it was probably dictated in large measure by political proclivities and there must have been unrelieved suffering in many places.

Illinois as a state did nothing on the subject either by state aid or by general instruction or even authorization to the local governing boards. Governor Yates, in his message of 1863, referred to the fact that many of the soldiers were "very poor and have large and helpless families". He recommended that the state refund bounties granted by the counties and that the legislature request Congress to increase soldiers' pay. Neither of these measures, both of which ignored the varying needs of individuals, was adopted. Many counties, however, without special authorization, voted money. I have not been able to differentiate the portion of grants paid for relief from that paid for bounties and general war expenses. It is significant, however, that thirty counties made no grants.<sup>17</sup> Of these only Jo Daviess was in the north. Champaign and DeWitt stood next in latitude, and of those south of this line, twenty-seven made no grant and twenty-six made grants.

Bounties have several times been mentioned in connection with relief. Properly they belong to another classification. They were not proportioned according to the needs of those receiving them, and the motive for granting them was primarily different from that impelling relief measures. Nevertheless they served to allay the anxiety of those enlisting for their families, and during and after 1863 they played a large part in the support of soldiers' families. This close connection is illustrated by a Wisconsin law of March 2, 1865, allowing Oshkosh to levy a "special volunteer tax" for bounties, the payment of which, in the case of married men, could be made in monthly installments.

State and local relief was not the sole reliance of those left at home. The pay of the soldier was not sufficient to provide for maintenance but was an item in the support of his family. The

<sup>17</sup> John Moses, *Illinois*, II. 735-737.



problem, however, was to get the money from the soldier to the family, and sometimes it was not easy to persuade the soldier to send home as much as it was felt he should.<sup>18</sup> This situation led to the development of the allotment service. This was organized on a somewhat peculiar basis, in that the officers employed in it held United States commissions but were appointed and paid by the states, which also managed the funds collected. Wisconsin on April 3, 1862, provided for allotment commissioners, with salaries fixed by the governor but not to exceed one thousand dollars each, or three thousand dollars in all. The state treasurer was to receive and distribute the money. Michigan authorized the payment of the travelling expenses of commissioners.<sup>19</sup> Ohio, on April 14, 1862, authorized the appointment of not over six, to receive expenses and two dollars a day while in service; this number was reduced on April 2, 1863, to three. A law of February 4, 1862, provided that the money be received into the state treasury, but paid over to the counties for distribution. Indiana took no state action on the subject, but the energetic Governor Morton saw to it that there were commissioners, and the Indiana system seems to have been effective.<sup>20</sup> Governor Yates of Illinois, in his message of 1863, protested the demand that the states pay for the allotment commissioners, but announced that two men had entered upon the service and recommended that they be paid.

The United States government was so strongly committed to the payment of pensions, that the Northern States deemed it unnecessary to devise any permanent plans for the future, but there was an opportunity for real suffering during the period between the death of the volunteer and the obtaining of the pension, while the securing of the latter was often a matter not of time alone, but also of money and knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Wisconsin, on April 2, 1863, provided that the state aid continue six months after the death of the principal, unless

<sup>18</sup> Governors' Correspondence, Organization, letter of allotment commissioner, Robert T. Fraser, July 28, 1862: "Found considerable reluctance. . . . I fear we will find it so with all the old Regiments, and I would earnestly but respectfully suggest that the allotments of the Regiments now being raised be taken *before they leave the state, and while the home feeling is strong.*"

<sup>19</sup> Michigan, *Session Laws*, extra sess., 1862, joint resolution no. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis* (Chicago, 1910), I, 226.

<sup>21</sup> Mrs. S. E. Vaughn wrote, November 15, 1863, that she had received no state aid as her husband had been a commissioned officer, but she wished aid in getting a pension. Mrs. M. A. Sewall wrote, December 3, 1863, asking why it cost so much to collect back money, bounty, and to get a pension. This letter is endorsed: "Will be called to attention of legislature to appoint a state agent to do it." See also *Messages and Proclamations of the Wisconsin War Governors*, Wisconsin History Commission, Reprints, no. 2.

the pension begin before. This act created an injustice in that it applied only to those who died after the act was passed. Some of the local relief, however, was extended without regard to this provision.<sup>22</sup> Michigan<sup>23</sup> and Ohio<sup>24</sup> from the beginning extended the relief until one year after death. The appointment of agents to assist the applicant in getting the pension was frequently urged, but the military claims agents appointed by Ohio under the law of April 14, 1863, seem not to have had these functions.<sup>25</sup> The only agents who seem to have been authorized to attend to such business were those of Illinois, appointed under the act of February 16, 1865.

In addition to these public resources, private charity, organized and unorganized, naturally assisted the necessitous in their own communities, as has doubtless been the case from the beginning of organized society. A letter to the governor of Wisconsin from the relief committee of Kenosha, June 13, 1861, asked how the state aid was to be distributed, "as it is important for us in our operations to know the facts in relation to the sources of supply for relief purposes". In many cases employers offered to continue pay to those enlisting.<sup>26</sup> A letter of June 23, 1864, from a woman with a husband and three sons in the army, but who by a technicality could not draw state aid, complained of being left "a subject for the aid society". The governor replied: "The local authorities or citizens should do something for you." In many cases subscriptions were made for this purpose in the flush of enthusiasm that were disregarded later on, and a Wisconsin law of April 2, 1863, enabled the town or city treasurer to bring suit to enforce such obligations. A wife writing to the governor, July 31, 1862, says that she is "depending upon the *few* loyal men there are left",<sup>27</sup> they

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Mrs. Laura Jones, May 22, 1862: "I send you a few lines begging you to extend the five dollars to those that have been dead the longest, why not to those that suffer the most my husband died in December but I am very destitute I draw from the city of Fond du Lac three dollars per month. Now I am destitute of a good husband and nothing to do with."

<sup>23</sup> Michigan, *Session Laws*, 1861, May 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ohio, *Session Laws*, 1861, May 10.

<sup>25</sup> "It shall be the duty of said agents to investigate, give advise and take such other action as will enable the discharged Ohio soldier speedily to obtain free of charge the money due him from the general government." February 17, 1865, a bureau for this purpose was established at Columbus.

<sup>26</sup> Butterfield, *History of Dane County*, p. 625 (August, 1862). See also Isaac Stephenson's *Recollections of a Long Life*. In the absence of evidence it is not probable that such promises were often kept for the four years of the war. They were made for the most part when it was supposed to be a three months' affair.

<sup>27</sup> The Cyrus Woodman Papers, manuscripts in the library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, contain references to such cases.

are poor but they do what they can; she hopes there will be a draft to take the men who ought to go; she doesn't know whether they fail to enlist because they are disloyal or "because the families of those that went at the *first call* have been so neglected by the state and general governments"; the county no longer gives assistance because it was claimed that some of those who received aid were "getting rich". Of course the women's own work was another resource. In the East particularly much was done by way of securing them an opportunity of work on soldiers' clothing—though they were seldom paid a real economic return for their work. On the farms they naturally extended their already busy hours and saved many a homestead for their families. In the small towns there was little opportunity, as one woman wrote the governor, July 25, 1864: "there are so many now left as I am that we scarce can find enough to do to keep want from our doors". She asks a postmastership, thus connecting the question of provision for the soldier's family with that for the soldier himself after the war. A joint resolution of the Wisconsin legislature of February 23, 1865, ran: "That it is the desire of the people of Wisconsin, that the post-offices and other federal offices within the state, be given, first, to disabled soldiers who may be competent, and, next, to other veteran soldiers."

The total amount of aid thus granted or secured in the five states was probably between thirty-five and forty-five millions. State aid cost Wisconsin \$5333, to October, 1861; \$283,614.71, the year following: \$604,991.42, in 1863; \$615,693.68, in 1864; and \$1,030,537.36, in 1865, or \$2,545,873.78 in all.<sup>28</sup> It is impossible to separate the proportion of the local aid which was given for family relief from that for bounties; I estimate one-third,<sup>29</sup> or \$2,580,000. Private contributions must have brought this local total to at least three million. The total soldiers' pay that passed through the hands of the state was \$1,051,519.89, reaching its height in 1863 when \$451,269.16 was distributed and declining to \$215,159.77 in 1865.<sup>30</sup> The probable total from these sources for Wisconsin was, therefore, about six and a half millions.

<sup>28</sup> Wisconsin, *Treasurer's Report*, 1862-1865. Of course this does not add up right, as is so frequently the case in financial reports of the Civil War period. The total figure is the more apt to be correct.

<sup>29</sup> This estimate is based upon the weighing and comparison of a large amount of material. It is doubtful if the material exists for an approximately exact statement.

<sup>30</sup> Wisconsin, *Treasurer's Report*, 1862-1865. Governor Solomon stated in his message of 1863 that up to December 15, 1862, \$1,783,705.92 had been allotted. The cause of this discrepancy I have not been able to discover, but the amounts collected for Wisconsin and for Ohio are about equal in proportion to their population.

The Ohio state tax actually furnished the needy with \$3,590,-257.34.<sup>31</sup> The county taxes devoted to this purpose could not be exactly estimated from the data at my disposal. During the war, however, the special county taxes increased over seven million. While much of this was for other than war purposes, it seems reasonable to suppose that two million and a half was for relief work.<sup>32</sup> The allotments of pay amounted to \$5,135,689.03,<sup>33</sup> and this makes a total of over eleven million for Ohio.

For Michigan I suppose a per capita expenditure half-way between that of Ohio and Wisconsin, and reach \$4,800,000.<sup>34</sup> By somewhat complicated calculations I reach an estimate of \$6,600,000 for Indiana, and \$8,400,000 for Illinois. Such figures may be very far from the truth, but I am very confident that they represent the minimum.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ohio, *Auditor's Reports*, 1862-1866. The assessment of 1865 was not all needed, and \$800,000 was turned over to the sinking fund and \$75,000 to a soldiers' home. The figure given is that of money actually paid the counties. There is room for discrepancies in the various accounts and the figure might be varied somewhat either way. The report of 1864 gives some estimates of distribution, but they chiefly show how few data the state government possessed.

<sup>32</sup> "Other special taxes" amounted in 1862, to \$279,743.04; in 1863, to \$1,292,266.60; in 1864, to \$3,975,698.07; in 1865, to \$2,735,107.84. Ohio, *Auditor's Reports*, 1862-1866.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> This is merely an arbitrary estimate. I am, however, confident that it does not overstate what Michigan did.

<sup>35</sup> I based this upon the finding that over considerable areas the amount of aid per family, where it was granted, tended to be much the same. Consequently the Michigan average was applied to Illinois, but the thirty counties not making grants were deducted. Over two millions must have come from soldier allotments, which leaves a little less than \$6,500,000 to be accounted for. J. S. Currey, *Chicago: its History and its Builders*, II. 148, gives \$2,801,239 for the war expenses of Cook County and Chicago. Moses, *Illinois*, II. 737, gives \$15,307,074 for all the counties (see also Davidson and Stuvé, *A Complete History of Illinois*, pp. 741-742). Taking one-third of this state total as probably for home relief, gives about five million. This leaves \$1,500,000 for town and private relief. Owing to the local organization of Illinois, the town of course gave much less than in Wisconsin, though the system in the northern tiers of counties was not dissimilar. The arbitrary estimate thus checked seems reasonably probable, with a tendency to under, rather than over, statement.

In the case of Indiana the actual figures for counties are very scattering. The arbitrary estimate is made on the same basis as that for Illinois, an equivalent number of counties being deducted.

It is to be noticed that the number of counties making no provision is not so great as the number controlled by the Democrats, though it was the Democratic area that failed to contribute. This is not surprising, as in no case where the voters were intimately consulted did the full Democratic strength support the extreme anti-war measures of the party leaders. In connection with soldiers'



These were very large sums for the people of that day to distribute, and the lack of attention which they received was due, of course, to the vastly greater drain of actual military expenditures and the more picturesque calls of the sick and wounded soldiery. Naturally so much was not spent without controversy and without suspicion of fraud, and probably actual fraud. In Wisconsin the payment of the state aid was sometimes suspended and often endangered because of lack of funds.<sup>36</sup> As early as November 11, 1861, Governor Randall of Wisconsin was informed that "gross frauds have been perpetrated by soldiers, through the agency of Justice . . . and others in Milwaukee in procuring the bounty given to families", and, in his message of 1863, Governor Lewis recommended a law to punish those who improperly sought relief. The governor of Ohio in his message of 1865 referred to complaints made of township officials. The raising of such sums, moreover, was no mean burden upon communities so heavily taxed and subjected to the high cost of living brought about by the war. In Wisconsin an ingrained dislike of public borrowing, although it did not altogether prevent loans, nevertheless stimulated the effort to meet the expense by taxation. This proved to be impossible, and the result in this case, as in others, was that a firm insistence upon an economic system too rigid for a state of its frontier condition, forced resort to the dangerous expedient of paper. The state paid in real money but many localities issued promises to pay, scrip of various kinds and denominations. On February 2, 1864, Beaver Dam was authorized to collect a tax to redeem such scrip, and similar action was frequently taken. On March 28, 1864, however, the local authorities were authorized to issue bonds.

Michigan authorized borrowing from the beginning, but in 1863 legalized "certain volunteer family relief orders". Ohio allowed temporary borrowing, but not Indiana. In Illinois the counties seem to have pursued an independent course, which occasionally required special legislation by the legislature. January 14, 1863, Boone County was ordered to levy a tax to repay orders which had been

pay it must be remembered that such pay reached the families in large amounts, even where there was no allotment system. In fact the special provision for the families may have somewhat diminished the sense of responsibility on the part of the soldier. It is probable that states with good systems succeeded in directing a somewhat greater proportion to the families, but the difference was probably hardly as great as might be supposed. I have somewhat lowered the Wisconsin and Ohio averages in estimating it for Indiana and Illinois, and do not believe the result is greater than the amount actually secured.

<sup>36</sup> *Messages and Proclamations of the Wisconsin War Governors*, pp. 104-109, 144. For a long time the financial provision was a hand-to-mouth affair.

issued, and on February 12, Bureau County was authorized to borrow money "for the benefit of volunteers, and in aid of the families of soldiers", and to issue county orders.

No such provision had ever before been made for the families of those fighting for their country. In spite of defects of system and irregularities of operation their actual needs were better attended to than in any previous war, and most notable was the general, almost universal, sentiment that such provision was not an ordinary charity, but was to be granted and accepted as a due. For one must remember that in the sixties ordinary charity was still upon the basis of sentiment rather than of social obligation. In the case of neither did the sense of social solidarity and conservation of native resources play any part. The noble words of the Indiana statute: "for the protection and maintenance of the families of volunteers",<sup>37</sup> are to be taken purely with their apparent meaning.

The spirit of the time is probably better illustrated in the correspondence of the successive governors of Wisconsin than anywhere else. One almost feels that the governor was regarded as the family counsellor in the absence of the husband. Always respectful, the letters are as intimate as to a father. A maiden writing "on her knees" pours out four pages of supplication that she be allowed to accompany her soon-to-be husband to the front—and obtained the favor, one can imagine with what result in stimulating the profanity of the officers.<sup>38</sup> A young wife writes that her husband's "fokes will keep him from doing anything for her".<sup>39</sup> Another admonishes the governor: "Now don't forget to get him discharged for i can't get a long without him he is a good man and i don't want him to die down there for i have my hands ful and heart full."<sup>40</sup> A young lady rather pertly states, "As I have been teaching school for a long time past and have grown rather sick of the business I thought that I would turn my attenion another way"—nursing.<sup>41</sup> An anxious writer wishes the governor to assist him in finding out about "a young brother who" does not write—"never was any hand to write".<sup>42</sup> A wife writes: "He is a kind man to his family and he is near sited and he has kidney complaint and he is forty-four years old and he can't be good for much there." One

<sup>37</sup> See above, p. 316.

<sup>38</sup> February 26, 1864.

<sup>39</sup> August 1, 1863. Her husband had been transferred to the Regulars: "i hav to eat and ware clothes the same as though he staid in his old regiment."

<sup>40</sup> September 17, 1863.

<sup>41</sup> July 20, 1863.

<sup>42</sup> September 10, 1861.

wife with four children asks the governor for a pass to Cincinnati where her mother is thought to be dying;<sup>43</sup> a sister writes: "Oh for the *love* of mercy *do dear Governor* grant me a pass. *Do* answer by return of mail."<sup>44</sup> A young lady about to go South to distribute articles for the soldiers in behalf of the local ladies' aid society asks the governor to facilitate her going by giving her "a Wet-Nurse commission or some other instrument in writing".<sup>45</sup> A soldier wants to know how his family is provided: "For I cannot be of much service to my country and had rather di in trying to go to their relief than stay hear and know as I do that they are left destitute by those who have promised to provide for them".<sup>46</sup>

Patriotism blazed from the letter-heads, and there is much denunciation of Copperheads. One felt that the rich were not doing enough. She was a mother with four children. When her husband left he expected "the county money" which had since been stopped. "Perhaps you might devise some means by which the rich may help support the poor in this time of need. When you think that the most of our soldiers are composed of poor men and they must do the fighting while the rich speculate if you think of this I think you will do Something."<sup>47</sup> Most of the families were left with a home, and often with some land about it; their need was for food and clothing; the number of children was frequently very large. A mother with a small daughter writes: "My son told me I would be provided for; for means had been provided, to supply every mother who had sent a son, as a volunteer through the term of the war, and every wife who had sent a husband . . . we are very lonely, and being destitute makes us down-hearted. I have a good home, but can't sell at all. If there was business here, so I could have boarders I would not ask assistance."<sup>48</sup> There was comparatively little complaint as to the amount of aid, but much because the system left many unprovided for. One wrote to know: "Whether my old and infirm parents in Europe, depending on me their sole sustainer, for the necessities of life, can draw those five dollars a month our noble state has granted".<sup>49</sup> A step-mother needed assistance.<sup>50</sup> The

<sup>43</sup> July 19, 1864.

<sup>44</sup> December 29, 1862. Many such requests were made for passes in cases of sickness. A receipt to Governor Lewis for "the sum of three dollars from soldiers' relief fund to enable me to visit my sick family at Waukesha", is one of the several evidences that they were occasionally granted.

<sup>45</sup> March 5, 1863.

<sup>46</sup> August 5, 1861.

<sup>47</sup> June 4, 1862.

<sup>48</sup> May 22, 1861.

<sup>49</sup> April 26, 1862.

<sup>50</sup> September 17, 1861.

failure of some of the states to provide for those whose sustainers had entered the regular army or navy, based, of course, upon a sound theory, nevertheless caused real hardship and doubtless contributed to the difficulty of securing recruits for those branches. The refusal of all the states to provide for non-residents in a time and a region where migration was an incident in the lives of so large a proportion of the population, left many without provision. The somewhat numerous cases where the chain of obligation had been interrupted by unsuccessful remarriages, though some may have been deserving, excite less sympathy;<sup>51</sup> marriages after the enlistment of the soldier created a more appealing problem.

Such cases arose without cessation throughout the war, if anything they increased as it went on. Their handling demanded more than efficiency, in fact they demanded great-heartedness rather than efficiency. In such a spirit they seem to have been dealt with. Successive governors not only returned gentle answers which turned away wrath, but, although the blank form letter was in wide use between officials and the army, gave to these applicants personal attention and often accompanied their replies with some pertinent suggestion. In their conduct we see the soil out of which Lincoln's qualities of head and heart grew. There is no evidence of the socialized state, though many things were being done which seem to characterize the socialized state. It was the neighborliness of a big and kindly community, democratic in its ideals and with a general similarity of conditions which produced general understanding of conditions. Historically the broadened conception of the responsibilities of a community at war for those suffering from the war was the product, not of economic theory nor of enlightened intelligence, but of the feeling and appreciation of its own necessities by a people really and inherently democratic.

C. R. FISH.

<sup>51</sup> See interesting letter of October 1, 1862, etc.